



SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

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Skagit Voluntary Stewardship Program Watershed Advisory Group

May 12, 2025, 8:00-10:00 am

Watershed Group Members in attendance: Emmett Wild, Jeff McGowan, Terry Sapp, Shannon Rupert

Other attendees: Taylor Scott, Jenn Johnson, Ryan Gelwicks

Meeting Notes

General VSP

Postcard Mailer and Survey: Taylor plans to send by next meeting. The post card with a QR code will be sent to certain watersheds, while a full-page flyer and survey will be sent to the remaining to track engagement by different outreach materials.

Attendance Policy and Guidelines

The WAG had previously decided that any members attending less than 70% of Watershed Group meetings in a calendar year may result in a request from the BoCC that the member be dismissed from the Group. Some members are at this mark, Taylor opened discussion on next steps.

- Shannon- good to have other voices that are more consistent
- Terry- does the BoCC seem to care about this topic?
 - o Jenn- Yes, they are the ones who approve- they are the ones who will say yes or no
- Emmett: Please make sure we are sending out this attendance policy to all members
- Terry- how easy it is to fill these positions? Time, interest, suitable background
- Jeff- Have you reached out to these folks? Please, give them a warning.
- Jeff- If they decide to resign, do they need to send a letter? Yes
- Jeff- Is there a rule on tribal participation?
 - o Jenn-The VSP needs to make a solid effort to reach out, send to everyone that could be interested. The VSP should have 9 WAG members.

Taylor will send out reminder and warning emails to members.

Upcoming Tech Panel Visit

The Washington State Conservation Commission and Tech Panel will be visiting the Skagit this summer. We have a scheduled time every two years to showcase projects and discuss priority topics.

- June 24th All Day Event
- WAG is invited and welcomed to attend either site visit or meeting or both.
- Jenn- Maybe we can show an older site that was successful?
- Terry- Wants to note that this is not a casual meeting, there are important topics being discussed and people are taking time out of their days to be there, some even volunteers.
- Taylor- Clarified that casual is a way to describe the setting, for example, during a field visit, many folks might feel more comfortable sharing thoughts when not on a computer screen or sitting around a table. This is why we will have half the day in the field and half in the office.

- Terry- Are they here to evaluate us? Jenn-No
- Terry- Trying to figure out how his presence could benefit? Would like to see the agenda
- The agenda will provide locations and times, but we would also like an agenda at each site. What topics are we trying to highlight? How does this site help us reach our goals and benchmarks? This will also be provided to WAG.

Taylor needs to have the agenda ready by the end of May to share with the Tech Panel, when complete she will send out to all WAG members to give them an opportunity to decide if and when they would like to attend.

2-YR Report Review

Skagit VSP 2-YR report is due on June 30th. This report varies by County, but can be used as an outreach tool to discuss how the program is going. Are we meeting our goals and how do we plan to do that? This document is NOT scored but is reviewed before events like our June 24th site visit.

From Mike and Tech Panel: Make this report useful for Taylor and Skagit VSP. This is a good way to track some data and pull it into your 5 year, highlight projects, ensure you're spending your money down, opportunity to tell a story but also mention where you can improve. This can be used as a tool for transparency in your county, showcase the good and support you get while talking about the benefits of the program.

- Terry- What is Adaptive Management?
 - o Our monitoring plan was not seen as adaptive management. Things like work plan edits that change program functions, goals and benchmarks, etc, will be flagged as adaptive management.
 - o [Adaptive management](#) is an iterative learning process producing improved understanding and improved management over time. It promotes flexible decision making that can be adjusted in the face of uncertainties as outcomes from management actions and other events become better understood.
- Taylor- Do we have any ideas for our 2025-2027 goals?
 - o Program Status: Downriver vs upriver?
 - o Increase participation upper Skagit

Final budget

All projects are on track to completion, and we were able to reallocate money to fund new projects. The team is working on closing out projects with WSCC.

- Terry- What do we do without money?
 - o We focus on monitoring and outreach, among other programmatic items.
- The WSCC will be releasing state funding a little differently this next biennium. The first project review date will be July 30th, followed by September 1st and then November 30th (estimated, not final). Each County will also be allocated a "set aside" of 40k.

Open Discussion

- Terry brought up the Critical Areas ordinance draft and some concerns. The ag advisory board missed the comment period. Will there be other opportunities?
- Jenn- We have made comments to planning but will follow up
- Terry- Didn't see VSP mentioned and doesn't seem clear on buffer requirements. What are the buffer requirements and how do they work with the VSP program.

- Taylor- Send out information on next open hearing
- May 20th? May 27th? June 16th? June 23rd?

Next Meeting July 14th